

## **Albuquerque District using 'stimulus' funding to repair dams, recreation areas**

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is using part of its \$4.6 billion in stimulus money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to improve dams, waterways and recreation areas across America.

One such project at Conchas Lake, N.M., is an echo from the past, according to Lt. Col. Kimberly M. Colloton, commander of the Corps of Engineers' Albuquerque District. She said this \$1.6-million project to improve roads and parking lots there is reminiscent of a historic attempt to revive the nation more than 75 years ago.

"An interesting aspect to this particular award is that Conchas was part of the original recovery act passed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression in the 1930s," Colloton said.

"The intent was to not only spur the economy, but to provide flood relief," she said. "Here we are 75 years later working to not only spur the economy again, but provide infrastructure needs to Conchas Dam with recovery act dollars."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Albuquerque District has awarded 36 projects since June with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"ARRA is a national initiative that we are responsible for executing locally," Colloton said. "We've been looking forward to using this funding to complete some key and essential projects and help energize local economies."

Twenty-six small businesses, mostly in New Mexico and Colorado, have already benefited from more than \$29 million in stimulus money the district was granted for military engineering, construction, operations and maintenance, officials there said.

Ten of the 36 projects have already been completed within the district. Of the 36 contracts awarded this year, 72 percent were awarded to small businesses.

"Small businesses are the heart of our economy and we're pleased that about half of our awards have gone to small businesses in New Mexico thus far," said Daniel Curado, deputy for small business for the Corps in Albuquerque.

"The ARRA provides an opportunity for local small businesses to help carry out our mission and participate in the improvement of today's economy. Historically, small businesses play an important role in helping the nation recover from economic downturns."

One New Mexico-based small business, Conservation Services, was awarded the most recent ARRA project by the Corps Sept. 30. The project is funded with \$784,071 to improve wildlife habitat at Bottomless Lakes State Park, New Mexico's first state park, located about 12 miles outside of Roswell, N.M.

"This is a small disadvantaged business award," said Curado. "To be classified as a disadvantaged small business, it must be at least 51 percent owned and/or controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals."

The purpose of the award is for placement of a 3,000-linear-foot boardwalk with wildlife blinds, removal of salt cedar from four acres of wetland habitat, and salt cedar re-sprout treatment. The contract is estimated to employ five people and is scheduled for completion in May 2010.

Though many ARRA projects in New Mexico and Colorado represent small slices of the \$29 million stimulus funding pie between the two states, the work continues to help stabilize local economies of small towns, not just larger ones, according to Corps officials there.

Other examples of the ARRA projects include an Overlay of Project Roads and Parking at John Martin Reservoir in Colorado that was awarded in July in the amount of nearly \$1.5 million.

Stimulus projects in New Mexico also include a Child Development Center at Cannon Air Force Base, awarded in August, in the amount of nearly \$7.9 million. It is part of a \$10.7-million award intended to augment and modernize the base. When complete, the structure will afford war fighters with the peace of mind that their families will be provided great care in a modern facility.

The Corps assisted in the project award at Cannon and will oversee the \$7.9 million construction of the center. The additional \$2.8 million at Cannon provides for utilities to support infrastructure on the Southeast side of the base and these Facilities, Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization projects were also awarded in August.

Out of the Albuquerque District there are 13 projects awarded thus far to small businesses in New Mexico, two to California, one to Colorado, one to Texas, and one to Arizona.